Dane-zaa language

Dane-zaa, known in the language as ***Dane-zaa Ẕáágéʔ*** (syll: ᑕᓀᖚ ᖚᘱᐟᐟ), formerly known as **Beaver**, is an Athabascan language of western Canada. It means "people-regular language." About one-tenth of the Dane-zaa people speak the language.

Beaver is closely related to the languages spoken by neighboring Athabaskan groups, such as Slavey, Sekani, Tsuu T'ina, Chipewyan, and Kaska.

Dialects

The dialects of Dane-zaa language are two main groups. Dialects that developed high tone from stem-final glottalic consonants are called *high-marked* and dialects that developed low tone *low-marked*. From north to south are as follows:[3]

- the **High-marked Dane-zaa** dialects:
  - Boyer River (Alberta) dialect is spoken by members of the Beaver First Nation
  - Child Lake (Alberta) dialect is spoken by members of the Beaver First Nation
  - Prophet River (British Columbia) dialect is spoken by members of the Prophet River First Nation
  - Blueberry River (British Columbia) dialect is spoken by members of the Blueberry River First Nation
  - Doig River (British Columbia) dialect is spoken by members of the Doig River First Nation
- the **Low-marked Dane-zaa** dialects:
  - Halfway River (British Columbia) dialect is spoken by members of the Halfway River First Nation

Dane-zaa		
Beaver		
Dane-zaa Ẕáágéʔ (ᑕᓀᖚ ᖚᘱᐟᐟ)		
Native to	Canada	
Region	British Columbia, Alberta	
Ethnicity	1,700 Dane-zaa[1]	
Native speakers	220, 13% of ethnic population (2016 census)[2]	
Language family	Dené–Yeniseian? • Na-Dené 　○ Athabaskan–Eyak 　　■ Athabaskan 　　　■ Northern Athabaskan 　　　　■ **Dane-zaa**	
Language codes		
ISO 639-3	bea	
Glottolog	beav1236 (https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/beav1236)	
ELP	Dane-Zaa (Beaver) (https://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/1440)	

Beaver is classified as Definitely Endangered by the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger

○ West Moberly Lake (British Columbia) dialect is spoken by members of the West Moberly First Nations

People	Dane-ẕaa ᑕᓄ�ב
Language	**Dane-ẕaa Ẕáágé?** ᑕᓄ�ב ᑲᓯ″
Country	Dane-ẕaa nané? ᑕᓄ�ב ᑲᓯ″ ᓇᓄ″, Denendeh ᑌᓄᑉᑌ·

Use and number of speakers

A 1991 estimate gave 300 total speakers out of a population of 600 Dane-zaa people.[4] Leading up to 2007, Dane-zaa was "spoken in eastern British Columbia (in the communities of Doig River (*Hanáẕ Saahgé?*), Blueberry, Halfway River, Hudson Hope, and Prophet River) and in northwestern Alberta (in the communities of Horse Lakes, Clear Hills, Boyer River (Rocky Lane), Rock Lane, and Child Lake (Eleske) Reserves)."[5][6] A 2011 CD by Garry Oker features traditional Beaver language chanting with world beat and country music.[7]

Language Loss

English is now the first language of most Dane-zaa children, and of many adults in the Dane-zaa communities. Dane-zaa was the primary language until the grandparents and parents started to send their children to school in the 1950s. English only became dominant in the 1980s. Because the language is orally based, Dane-zaa becomes increasingly endangered as the fluent speakers pass away. The 1918 Spanish flu epidemic was a contributor in language loss because it decimated the Dane-zaa population, claiming the lives of hunters, mothers and the older population. To fully recover from this, it took several generations. Because fluency lay in the older generation, the epidemic played a part in that loss of language.[8] The loss of Suu Na Chii K'chinge, the traditional meeting place for the Dane-zaa, along with residential schools, resulted in the loss of language. As schools were built on the reserves, a lack of teachers due to the isolation as well as them being forbidden to write about the poverty and realities of colonial violence added to that loss.[9]

Language documentation

Alfred Garrioch (1848-1934) was a Christian missionary of the Anglican Church Mission Society (CMS) who worked with the Beaver. He was born in 1848 in what would later become Manitoba. In 1876 he established a CMS mission and Indian children training school at Fort Vermilion, under the name of Unjaga Mission. He learnt and analysed the Beaver language and translated the Gospel of Mark into Beaver. In the mid-1880s he visited England where he had his work in the Beaver language printed. In 1886 Garrioch returned to mission work among the Beaver Indians. In 1892 he returned to Manitoba. In 1905 he retired from active work and settled at Portage la

Prairie, Manitoba. In 1925 he wrote two autobiographical accounts of his life called *The Far and Furry North* and in 1929 *A Hatchet Mark in Duplicate*. He died in 1934.

In 1885 the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) published *A Primer and a Vocabulary in the Beaver Indian Language*. In 1886 SPCK published *A Manual of Devotion in the Beaver Indian Language* and also published his Gospel of Mark in syllabic characters with syllabarium, supplementary syllabarium, chapter headings and illustrations. In 1886 the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) published his Gospel of Mark as *Ootech oochu Takehniya-Tinkles St. Mark* in Roman characters without the illustrations. This has been digitised and is online on YouVersion[10] and BibleSearch.[11]

In 1959 and throughout the 1960s, anthropologist Robin Ridington began working with the Doig River First Nation on the documentation and recording of Dane-zaa. He returned in 1978 with his second wife Jillian Ridington and they worked with Howard Broomfield and linguist Billy Attachie. His daughter Amber Ridington collaborated with Dane-zaa youth and elders to create *Dane Wajich: Dane-zaa Stories and Songs-Dreamers and the Land*, a virtual library that has made Dane-zaa pronunciations and other resources on Dane-zaa culture available to the public.[12]

In 1968 John chapter 3 was translated by Marshall and Jean Holdstock and published as *Lǫ́ǫse nadááse* by Scripture Gift Mission.

In 2004–2011, the language as spoken by the elders of the Beaver First Nations communities in Alberta and British Columbia was collected as part of the DoBeS Beaver documentation project. The intent was to document an endangered language from a place names' perspective, collecting place names along with stories of culturally relevant locations and personal migration stories, allowing for the exploration of spatial expressions in the language. These materials, along with other grammatical and pedagogical items, are held in the DoBeS Archive and are available for download, subject to agreeing to the terms of access.

Phonemes

Consonants

Dane-zaa has 35 consonants:

	Bilabial	Dental	Alveolar			Postalveolar / Palatal	Velar	Glottal
			plain	sibilant	lateral			
Nasal	m		n					
Plosive unaspirated	p	t̠s̠	t	ts	tɬ	tʃ	k	
Plosive aspirated		t̠s̠ʰ	tʰ	tsʰ	tɬʰ	tʃʰ	kʰ	ʔ
Plosive ejective		t̠s̠'	t'	ts'	tɬ'	tʃ'	k'	
Fricative voiceless		s̠		s	ɬ	ʃ	(x)	h
Fricative voiced		z̠		z	ɮ	ʒ	ɣ	
Approximant						j	w	

Vowels

Dane-zaa has 10 phonemic vowels.

		Front	Central	Back
Close	full	i		u
Close	reduced	ɪ		ʊ
Mid	oral	e		o
Mid	nasal	ẽ		õ
Open	reduced		ɜ	
Open	full		a	

Two vowels contrast oral and nasal qualities.

Grammar

Dane-zaa has gender-neutral pronouns where less importance is put on the person.[13]

- His/Her/It: *ma-*

- His/Her own: *da-*

Notes

1. "Aboriginal Ancestry Responses (73), Single and Multiple Aboriginal Responses (4), Residence on or off reserve (3), Residence inside or outside Inuit Nunangat (7), Age (8A) and Sex (3) for the Population in Private Households of Canada, Provinces and Territories, 2016 Census - 25% Sample Data" (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=110522&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Te

mporal=2017&THEME=122&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=) . *www12.statcan.gc.ca*. Government of Canada. 25 October 2017. Retrieved 2017-11-23.

2. "Language Highlight Tables, 2016 Census - Aboriginal mother tongue, Aboriginal language spoken most often at home and Other Aboriginal language(s) spoken regularly at home for the population excluding institutional residents of Canada, provinces and territories, 2016 Census – 100% Data" (http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/lang/Table.cfm?Lang=E&T=41&Geo=01) . *www12.statcan.gc.ca*. Government of Canada. 2 August 2017. Retrieved 2017-11-23.

3. Miller, Julia Colleen (2013). *The phonetics of tone in two dialects of Dane-ẕaa (Athabaskan)* (https://digital.lib.washington.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/1773/23468/Miller_washington_0250E_11641.pdf?sequence=1) (PDF) (PhD dissertation). University of Washington. hdl:1773/23468 (https://hdl.handle.net/1773%2F23468) .

4. "Ethnologue report for language code: bea" (http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=bea) . *Ethnologue*. Retrieved 2012-10-18.

5. Victor Golla (2007) *Atlas of the World's Languages*, p. 11

6. Ridington & Ridington 2013, p. 3.

7. "Local Aboriginal Artist Performing at CD Release Ceflebration (Garry Oker)" (https://archive.today/20130115110753/http://www.neabwc.ca/content/local-aboriginal-artist-performing-cd-release-celebration) . *Aboriginal Business Centre*. 2011-03-15. Archived from the original (http://www.neabwc.ca/content/local-aboriginal-artist-performing-cd-release-celebration) on 2013-01-15. Retrieved 2012-10-18.

8. Ridington & Ridington 2013, p. 253.

9. Ridington & Ridington 2013, pp. 297–298.

10. *St. Mark 1 | BEA1886R Bible | YouVersion* (https://www.bible.com/en-GB/bible/1664/mrk.1) .

11. "Global.Bible" (https://bibles.org/bea-BEA1886/Mark/1) .

12. Ridington & Ridington 2013, pp. xii, 6.

13. Ridington & Ridington 2013, p. 10.

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- "Dane Wajich-Dane-ẕaa Stories and Songs-Dreamers and the Land" (https://web.archive.org/web/20170301000819/http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/expositions-exhibitions/danewajich/english/index.html) . Doig River First Nation. 2007. Archived from the original (http://www.vi

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- Ridington, Robin; Ridington, Jillian (2013). *Where Happiness Dwells: A History of the Dane-zaa First Nations*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

External links

- Beaver page on First Nations Languages of British Columbia site, with bibliography (http://www.ydli.org/langs/beaver.htm)

- Beaver Indian Language (Dunneza, Tsattine) (http://www.native-languages.org/beaver.htm)

- FirstVoices Tsaa? Dane - Beaver People Community Portal (http://www.firstvoices.com/en/Tsaa_Dane)

- Beaver Language, DoBeS (http://www.mpi.nl/DOBES/projects/beaver)

- OLAC resources in and about the Beaver language (http://www.language-archives.org/language/bea)

- Dane Wajich-Dane-zaa Stories and Songs-Dreamers and the Land